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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage May 15 on the continuing rescue effort for the Sichuan earthquake and the humanitarian aid that Taiwan is providing to China. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" urged that Taiwan embrace new thinking in its Asia strategy while the United States' hegemony in Asia is declining and relations among Asian countries is taking a new shape. End summary.

"Taiwan Must Find Way in New Asia"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (5/15):

"... The litmus test for the direction that the PRC will take may well be its behavior in East and Northeast Asia and, especially, in the Taiwan Strait.

"Given its weak formal diplomatic position and economic reliance on China and Japan, Taiwan will face severe challenges in this new environment and Taiwan policy makers will have to carefully consider Taiwan's future alternative paths and the possible roles in a radically new multipolar East Asia.

"Taiwan has long been preoccupied with its domestic political strife and the tense relations with the PRC and therefore rarely takes serious note of international affairs.

"Taiwan can no longer afford such narcissism.

"In the short term, the new Kuomintang government should take advantage of the current climate of regional detente to link the security of the Taiwan Strait with the question of guarantees for overall East Asian security and call on the PRC to abandon any use or the threat of force against Taiwan.

"In the longer term, in East Asia's new multipolar world, Taiwan can no longer depend solely on the US for its security and must develop its own capabilities, strategies and voice on regional issues such as west Pacific security, economic development, climatic change and democratic development and human rights to build its own influence and provide a foundation for values-based strategic alliances."

YOUNG